i) Enhancement of budget outlays for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme for the promotion of education of girl children, have been given impetus.

ii) Introduction of cooked Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme for all children in classes I - VIII in Government / Local Body and Government Aided Schools, and Centres under the Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) and Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS).

iii) Levy of 2% Education Cess on all central taxes in order to bridge the gap between available plan resources and estimated requirement to finance the programme for universalisation of elementary education, specifically SSA and MDM.

Decrease in biology students

†1431. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of students opting for biology in class XI has seen a fall in the current session;

(b) whether any assessment of the reasons therefor has been undertaken;

(c) whether this fall would adversely affect the number of doctors in future; and

(d) if so, the remedial measures being contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Biology is offered as an elective 'subject in Class XI and XII. There has been a fall in the number of candidates appearing in the subject "biology" in Class XII exam being conducted by CBSE in 2008 as compared to 2007.

(b) No formal assessment of reasons has been done by the Ministry, but probable reasons include limited avenues for biology students to pursue medicine, longer duration of medicine course and preference of students for engineering courses.

(c) CBSE conducts All India Pre-Medical/Pre Dental Entrance Examination (AIPMT). In 2008, about 1.48 lakh students appeared for 2206 seats that were available. Since only a few of students opting for biology in classes XI and XII go for medicine degree, reduction in candidates opting for biology is not likely to affect the number of doctors in the near future in a significant manner.

(d) For promoting students' interest in science and inspiring them to pursue science related careers, CBSE has been organizing Regional level and National level Science Exhibitions. In addition, a number of orientation programmes for Science Teachers working in CBSE affiliated schools have been organized to enhance their professional competency.

Setting up of an international university

1432. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.